

COOPERATIVE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION STUDENT
CHARACTERISTICS IMPORTANT FOR
EMPLOYMENT AND JOB SUCCESS
AS VIEWED BY EMPLOYERS

By

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The goal of cooperative vocational education is to help students become successful at work and to prepare them for entry level or gainful employment. This is done by helping them develop knowledge and skills in classroom studies and work experience on the job. To keep up with the technological changes that occur in our society, there is a need for continuous change in vocational education programs. A great concern now about education in general is the relevance of curriculum and instruction to meet the needs of employment and job success of today's youth. In order for the goal of cooperative vocational education to be reached and for vocational training to be relevant we must continually improve and update our methods of training and instruction in the classroom.

Statement of the Problem

There is a need today for relevant up-to-date curriculum for use in cooperative vocational education programs. Educators and employers should work cooperatively to develop relevant vocational curriculum materials.

The problem with which this study is concerned, is the lack of information relative to employers perceptions of required and desirable traits of successful employees.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine cooperative vocational education characteristics which employers feel are important for employment and job success. Research of this nature will determine specific characteristics, to be used in evaluation and development of the total cooperative vocational education program and curriculum.

Objective of the Study

The objective is to compile a list of student characteristics important for employment and job success as viewed by selected employers.

Assumptions

For the purpose of this study the following assumptions are made:

1. Cooperating employers are the most important sources of data.
2. That the opinions expressed by the employers were accurate reflections of their needs.
3. The employers selected for the study were representative of the other employers in the Tulsa area.
4. The completed research will provide a means of basis which will be useful in planning more effective programs and curriculum materials.

Limitations

The instrument used to gather data reveal opinions of the employers of student-learners in the Tulsa area, participating in the cooperative vocational education program.

Definition of Terms

The following definitions are included to enhance the understanding of this study.

Employer or Training Station Sponsor--refers to any company or person who employs a student-learner.

Student-Learner or Student Trainee--refers to students who participates both in the classroom and on-the-job in the cooperative vocational education program.

Coordinator--refers to a teacher of cooperative vocational education who is responsible for coordinating students' classroom training in an occupation; also, on-the-job training and placement of the student.

Related Instruction Class--refers to the class at school where related study takes place under the coordinator's direction. Areas of study are (a) general information desirable for all workers and (b) specific information essential to performance of certain job operations.

Cooperative Vocational Education--refers to vocational education for young people, with the cooperation of the school and the employer in providing instruction in the classroom related to one's chosen occupation and training on-the-job. These two experiences must be

planned and supervised by the school and employers so that each contributes to the student's education and his employability.

Scope

The information for this study was collected through the use of the Delphi method. The data gathering instrument was taken to Cooperative Vocational Education Training Station Sponsors who had participated in the cooperative vocational education program in the Tulsa area.

The questionnaire did not deal with only personal or skills characteristics, but hoped to get opinions in both areas.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

In this chapter the review of literature will be divided into the following areas: (1) relevance and historical definitions of cooperative vocational education; (2) providing occupational education to meet changing needs; (3) development of the Cooperative Vocational Education curriculum; (4) employer attitudes toward cooperative vocational education programs; (5) program evaluation.

Efforts to find research which used employers to evaluate the relevance of the cooperative vocational education programs, revealed a rather small number of research reports in this area. Throughout an ERIC search, there were no signs of research in which employers were asked to give their opinions of characteristics which they felt are important for employment and job success. Most frequently found were follow-up studies on graduates of the programs or data collected by teacher-coordinators.

Cooperative Vocational Education

The goal of quality education is the maximum development of the whole person. Cooperative vocational education has played a significant role in helping young people work and move toward that goal.

The role that cooperative vocational education has played in American education is shown by the following Baseline report.

The cooperative programs is the classic ideal of vocational education. During the formative period, 1906-17, the concept of cooperation between business and education, industry and education, or employer and education was thought to be representative of the ultimate goal of vocational education. Experience since 1917 bears out the validity of the concept despite the fact that definitive data about cooperative education has been sketchy. Subjective data show a high degree of placement and a high degree of retention for students in cooperative programs. In addition, contemporary attitudes among Chamber of Commerce, Industry-Education Councils, and business generally throughout the nation strongly support cooperative vocational education (Lee, 1972, p. 19).

White (1972) discussed his rationale of cooperative vocational education as:

The very essence of cooperative vocational education is a strong working relationship between the business community and the cooperative education teacher-coordinator toward their mutual goal of preparing youth for occupational competence in the world of work. Teacher-coordinators have educational preparation and prior work experience which facilitate occupational education for students. Representatives from business and industry have the depth of occupational competency which contributes to the growth and development of youth in the world of work (p. 2).

Evans (1969, p. 19) stated that over fifty years ago the University of Cincinnati decided that a better education could be gained if students spent a part of their school career working and if the school program would be related to what they learned on the job.

It has been stated by many sources that cooperative education has the best record of all vocational programs for reaching their goals.

If administrators and teachers try to set up vocational education programs without the advice and help from employers and employees,

Evans (1971) states two major problems would probably occur:

- (1) Programs might be established which did not meet local manpower needs.
- (2) Employers and employees, not having been involved, would regard vocational education as 'their programs' rather than as 'our programs' (p. 276).

In researching available literature that had specific reference to evaluation of the relevance of the cooperative vocational education program, no studies were found that dealt with the specific desires of the employer. According to Wallace (1972, p. 15): "A study of employers' concerns and expectations and the work environment of the individual training station would produce pertinent information."

Cooperative education has grown and developed through the use of federal funds authorized under the Vocational Education Amendments, Part G, of 1968. The definition of cooperative education set up under this act is "Cooperative education is a program of vocational education involving employers, students and the school" (State Department of Vocational and Technical Education, no date, pamphlet).

Occupational Education to Meet Changing Needs

There has been much study done on the need to prepare man for technological changes in our society.

The fast pace of technological and social change has resulted in rapid changes in requirements for many occupational skills. Also, the growing complexity of industry which increases occupational specialization requires more extensive special training or education (Oregon Employment Service, 1972, pamphlet).

The technological changes in our society have created a change in requirements and needs of some occupations. There is a need to identify the characteristics of those needs and requirements.

"To keep teachers of vocational subject-matter areas close to the real world of work can be a joint responsibility of education and the occupational community" (Barlow, 1971, p. 30).

Evans (1971) feels that cooperative vocational education is working towards meeting changes of the labor market.

Quick adaptability to changes in labor market demands characterizes [Cooperative Work Education] CWE programs. By contrast, vocational education which is based on school operated laboratories can become quite out of tune with labor market demands . . . the school has little flexibility in dropping out-dated programs. Since Cooperative Work Education uses instructors on the job and since opening for training stations are closely related to opportunities for full time employment of graduates, Cooperative Work Education is quickly responsive to changes in the labor market (p. 196).

The University of Minnesota's Guide for Cooperative Vocational Education discussed providing occupational education to meet changing needs.

With the rapid changes that are occurring in occupations, school must adapt vocational education to current and future employment opportunities, as well as to the personal needs of students and to societal needs. Cooperative vocational education need not be narrow job training unless the planners and operators made it so, either consciously or unconsciously. There are more viable ways and means of sensitizing occupational education to the changing occupational and social needs in cooperative vocational education than in educational plans which do not have accompanying occupational experience (1969, p. 43).

Cooperative Vocational Education Curriculum

In order for a teacher to teach effectively he should have adequate instructional materials and use them correctly. A major weakness in vocational instruction is the lack of these materials, their insufficient supply or the obsolescence of what is available (Evans and Terry, 1971, pp. 87-102).

Evans (1971) discussed the shortage of curriculum materials.

Cooperative programs have been hampered by a shortage of adequate instructional materials of three basic types: (1) material for the general vocational instruction which applies to all of the occupations supervised by a particular coordinator; (2) materials directly related to each of these occupations, and (3) material which is suitable for developing on-the-job trainers. The Vocational Education Amendments of 1968 authorized seventeen million dollars over the next two years for the preparation of curriculum materials. Very high priority should be given to the development of instructional materials for the three phases of Cooperative Work Education (p. 201).

Funds were provided by the 1968 Vocational Education Amendments for employing specialists to develop curriculum at the state level.

The Minnesota Cooperative Vocational Education Guide stated that curriculum should be developed in this way:

In addition to using state vocational education funds to employ curriculum materials specialists, there is the possibility of contracting for projects with in-service teacher-coordinators or with individuals in business and industry who are particularly well qualified to develop the needed materials. The relevancy of the content and the acceptability of materials by teacher-coordinators are often enhanced by the participation of practitioners in writing them (University of Minnesota, 1969, p. 108).

The Curriculum and Instructional Materials Center for Oklahoma State Department for Vocational and Technical Education was established in 1969. The general purpose of the center is to provide for the development, collection, and dissemination of curriculum materials for use in vocational and technical education programs in Oklahoma (State of Oklahoma, no date, pamphlet).

Harry Robinson, Program Specialist for Cooperative Vocational Programs, State Department of Vocational and Technical Education, explained that the Curriculum and Instructional Materials Center worked on the development of a Cooperative Vocational Course of Study from July, 1971 to December, 1971 (Personal Interview, 1976). "These curriculum materials were designed to instruct the student in the personal qualities and job competencies necessary for employment and upgrading" (CVE Course of Study, 1972, p. xi). The contents of the Cooperative Vocational Course of Study were planned and reviewed by 12 cooperative vocational education teacher-coordinators, two cooperative office educational teacher-coordinators, two curriculum specialists, the State Department of Vocational and Technical Education Staff, three teacher educators from the University of Oklahoma, Oklahoma State University and the Central State University and three insurance agents (CVE Course of Study, 1972, p. ix). Figure 1 shows the model for curriculum materials development as was used in the development of the Cooperative Vocational Education Course of Study.

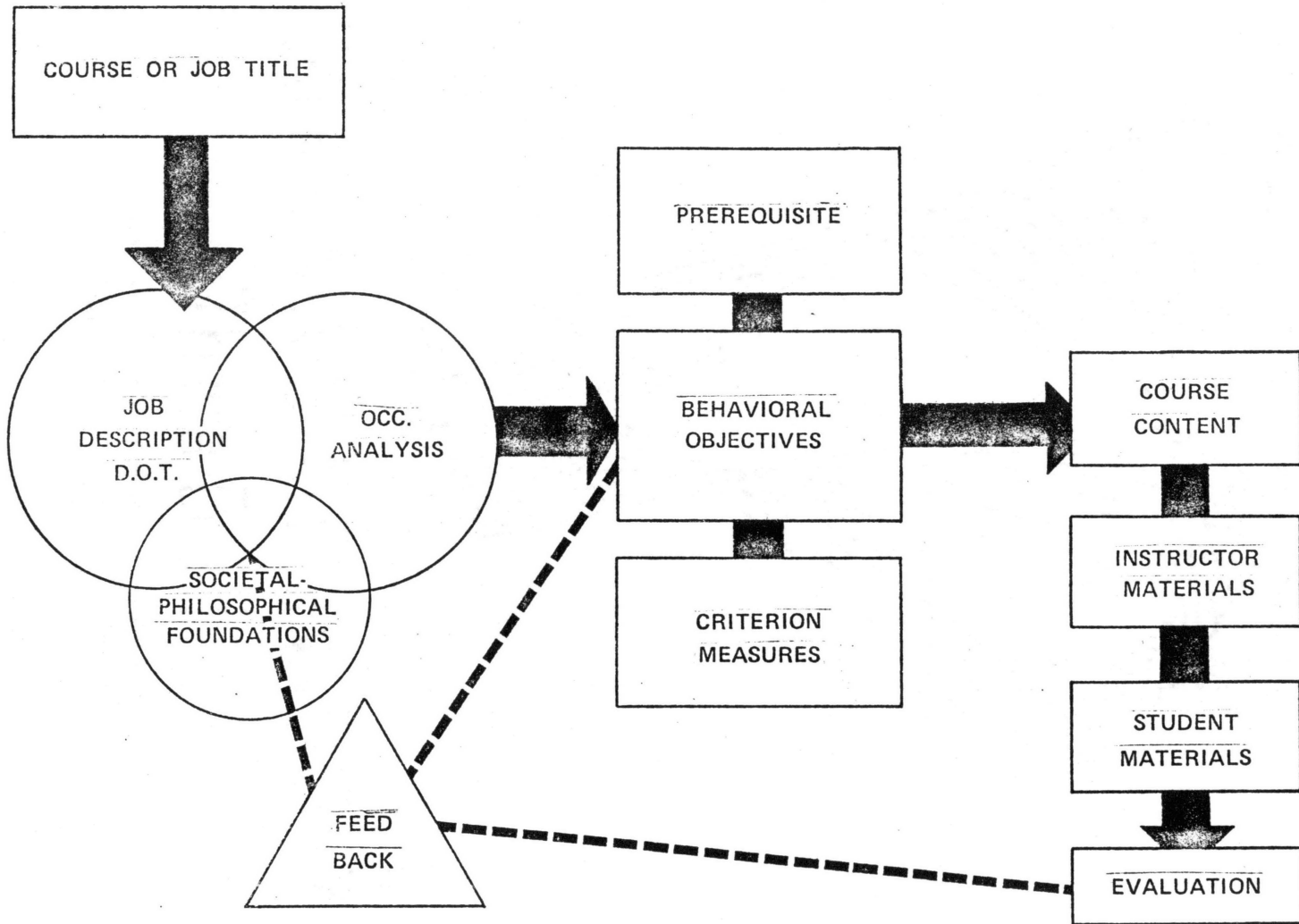


Figure 1. Model for Curriculum Materials Development

These participants were asked to help plan and review the CVE curriculum in order to meet the following purpose of the curriculum materials (State of Oklahoma, no date, learning packet):

1. Develop program uniformity
2. Provide transportability of curriculum
3. Place greater validity in training programs
4. Provide standards for employment
5. Provide accountability of instruction
6. Provide opportunity for in-service on technical content
7. Assist teachers in program instruction.

The method of development used for the CVE curriculum materials followed along the same principles that Bruce (1971, pp. 49-50) stated were needed to make sure that curriculum materials were used and that they were useable. He felt that many people should be involved in developing curriculum for it to be useable. He suggested that vocational teachers, state directors, teacher educators, curriculum materials specialists and representatives from business and industry all be involved in the planning.

Employer Involvement

Cooperative education allows the employer to become a partner of the school in the selection, instruction and training of young workers. He thus gains a source of choice, motivated workers, launched on a career in keeping with their interests and aptitudes (Huffman, 1969, p. 18).

Hunt (1974) stated in his book 50 Views of Cooperative Education that:

Employers have their concerns about the relevancy of education, not only in the criticism of curricula content but also the lack of knowledge by faculty and students of the reality of the world of work (p. 11).

It went on to state:

It appears that we have an ever widening separation between academia and industry. With some exceptions, little has been done to enhance the industry-college relationship. The Cooperative Program has done as much to narrow the gap between industry and the college as any other program (p. 15).

Robert Young (1973, p. 21) stated that the reason why employers supported his research was because the information given by the employers would facilitate his performance in guiding students toward jobs. The information gained would help him to suggest curricular improvements which would make the curriculum more relevant to the employers' needs.

Butler (1971) stated that employers benefit from cooperative vocational education in the following ways:

- (1) Helps improve training programs in the business,
- (2) Future employees for the business establishment may be developed through the cooperative program,
- (3) Brings recognition to the employer, (4) Offers an opportunity to participate in an educational program of benefit to the community (p. 5).

Employer benefits as found by Hunt (1974, p. 10) were that students of cooperative programs not only turn out with a degree but they knew what industry was about and what they wanted to do in industry. It can also be determined through a student's participation in the program how they can best be trained and developed as a permanent employee, that is immediately productive and needs little or no additional training.

Research done by Marcia A. Boyer (1970) and Lester E. Sanders (1967) found that their employers stated benefits similar to those given above.

The Minnesota Handbook (1969, pp. 83-84) stated that "a good image of cooperative vocational education is achieved through teamwork." The best way to win an employer over to cooperative education is to keep

him informed about his responsibilities and the benefits of the program.

In the past some well-meaning employers have been willing to employ students but have never understood the training and educational aspects of the program. Employers are always interested in finding good potential employees. Their participation in program planning, advisory committees, evaluation, and public relations activities helps to keep them informed and involved in the program (pp. 83-84).

The Manpower Administration funded the Columbus Laboratories of the Battelle Memorial Institute to study the vocational education programs in three Michigan communities. The report (1973, p. 241) stated "building good vocational programs takes knowledge of job opportunities and of the specific skills needed by employers." The purpose of the study was to find out if the schools were following the guidelines given above and if not, make recommendations on doing so. A list of tasks for each occupation was compiled from available curriculum materials and from teachers' suggestions. Then employers were interviewed to find out the importance of these tasks in employment situations. Graduates and teachers of the vocational program were questioned on their performance of the task given by the employers. When the study showed a difference between employers' expectations and the performance of the skills or tasks, recommendations were made to reduce the differences. Some of the recommendations of the study were:

1. to set up an advisory committee to help with the development of a relevant vocational program;
2. to develop detailed objectives for the course on which to evaluate the program;

- (3) hire teachers who are up-to-date in knowledge of industry and business' needs;
- (4) use employer training programs;
- (5) inform the employer of how he can evaluate the students' performance;
- (6) evaluate the students on their performance;
- (7) conduct follow-up studies on job placement, performance of graduates, and changes in job skills needed by employers.

James Keeton ran a study to identify characteristics which are thought to influence the placement of vocational graduates on the job. The persons surveyed were 40 cooperative vocational education coordinators. This study found that an industrious vocational teacher is the most important influence in placing vocational graduates. The attitude and willingness of all persons involved in the placement of the graduate, and a logical and relevant approach in planning and implementing the program were next in importance. The recommendations given by the author (Keeton, 1973) were that further studies be made of:

- (1) employers' opinion in terms of characteristics which influence the placement of the vocational graduates;
- (2) all levels of influence on the placement of the vocational graduate;
- (3) vocational programs and objectives in terms of their relevance to placement of vocational education graduates (pp. 40-41).

A study done by Richard Perlan (1969) found that there was dissatisfaction by employers with the adequacy of vocational school preparation. They felt that the instruction was not keeping pace with the technological advances in the occupations studied. The

employers felt that there was no significant difference in the training needed by the vocational education graduates and those who had not had any vocational training.

Perlan recommended the setting up of a new system of cooperative training between vocational schools and the employing firms.

In a study done by Charles Havener (1966) one of the objectives was to identify personal characteristics displayed by student-learners. Employers were asked during an interview to designate the performance of their student-learner on a characteristic and skills scale ranging from "outstanding" to "good" to "acceptable" to "fair" to "poor" to "NA/No." Havener felt that "in view of the time and efforts expended by employers in training and supervising the student-learners, no one else could have been in a better position to observe personal qualities or characteristics."

On the basis of the research done by Havener, he recommended:

1. Effective research of programs is the best means of providing information which will serve as an aid to planning even more effective programs. Since cooperating employers are interested in more effective programs and have chosen to be cooperative in research activity, more research should be planned with employers playing a major role.
2. The merits of coordinated summer program should be studied
3. The advantages of placing a coordinator on an 11 or 12-month contract should be enumerated and given careful consideration To suggest: working jointly with employers to develop or revise training outlines; to do research . . . visit industry . . . etc. (doctoral dissertation).

The Minnesota Handbook (1969) stated concerning evaluation:

Cooperative vocational education programs should be evaluated in terms of student outcomes and on the effects of the program on local manpower conditions, as well as on program characteristics and operating practices (p. 110).

Usually the following kinds of information are considered in evaluating characteristics:

Instructional Materials:

currency, relevancy, variety, and accessibility, adequacy of reference and individual study materials

Method of Evaluation:

basis for evaluating students' performance criteria, use of follow-up studies, participation of employers and students in evaluation process (p. 112).

More research and evaluation are needed to give direction to program planning and improvement of practices. In order to give students better occupational preparation, and to extend cooperative vocational education to more individuals, local schools, state boards, and other agencies involved in program development must give primary considerations to ancillary services (p. 115).

Summary

The references consulted showed that there is a need to evaluate the relevancy and the effectiveness of our vocational education programs. There are many people who should help in this evaluation: students, administrators, parents, teacher-coordinators, employment agencies, and employers. It is felt by many sources that the employer should play an important part in the evaluation of the vocational programs, because he is always present in the world of work, is there when the changes are being made, and is the person who employs students and graduates therefore, he knows what he needs and what would make vocational education relevant.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURE

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to identify student characteristics which employers feel are important for employment and job success. The objectives which were formulated to accomplish this purpose is to compile a list of the student characteristics important for employment and job success as viewed by the employer.

In order to obtain the information needed the Delphi research technique was used. It is a means of securing opinions of a panel of experts, the experts in this study being the employers.

To describe the methods by which this study was conducted this chapter is divided into the following sections: (1) the research design; (2) selection of the population; and (3) method of data collection.

Research Design and Method of Data Collection

The Delphi technique may be used as a planning process, and is a means of gathering information from a panel of experts without bringing them face-to-face. By preventing this face-to-face confrontation, there is less effect of personality bias which may happen in the conference approach (Key, 1974, p. 11).

This opinion of experts is usually gained through the use of successive questionnaires and feedback with each round of questions being designed to produce more carefully considered group opinions (Key, 1974, pp. 10-11).

The procedures used in the Delphi technique are as follows:

1. A questionnaire is mailed to the participants which asks them to respond to a statement or question, thus, giving their opinion.
2. The second round is sent out a copy of the list obtained from the first round, and each participant is asked to rate or evaluate each item on a set criterion scale as to the items importance in their opinion.
3. The third round was designated as the final round includes a combined list of the items as they were ranked in the second round. The participant was asked to make any changes in the order or to add any changes he deemed necessary and to give reason for that change.
4. The fourth questionnaire includes list, ratings, consensus, and minority opinions. It provides the final chance for revision of opinions.

In order to gain the support and participation of employers for this study, there was a need for them to feel a part of the program. They needed to see the benefit of the study in relation to their needs. The objective was accomplished by a cover letter which was attached to the first questionnaire. The cover letter stated in essence that the use of past training or instructional materials is often out-dated

soon, because of a rapid changing society. Instructional materials and training materials based on current trends are a much better way of planning. Educational planning of the present, based on the past, has resulted in shortages in some occupations and overtrained personnel in other occupational fields. Therefore, there is a need for up-to-date, relevant instructional and training materials. The benefits to the employers by playing a great part in this study will provide personnel to choose from which are prepared with the employers needs in mind.

The number of questionnaire rounds used to collect information involved in the use of the Delphi technique vary from three to six. Three sequential questionnaires were used to obtain a consensus on the list of characteristics important for employment and job success, as viewed by selected employers in the Tulsa area. The amount of information collected from the three correspondence sheets was felt to be adequate and that further contact with the participants would be tiresome to the respondents and have very little or no effect of change in the ranking of the statements. Cyphert and Grant (1971) indicated that:

Virtually all (99 per cent) of the respondents' changes in opinion occurred on Questionnaire III which informed them of the first 'consensus' reached by the group. With hindsight, one can seriously question the need for going beyond Questionnaire III (p. 273).

Ellen Bowers (1976) concluded that:

In the earlier studies where consensus was the goal, a greater number of rounds, with more supplementary and feedback information provided, was required. As the emphasis of the studies has shifted from a non-data base into an attitudinal or perceptual orientation the goal for a tendency toward convergence reduces the number of rounds necessary (p. 33).

Therefore, the modified Delphi technique utilized in this study eliminated the fourth mailing.

The first step of the study was to ask the employers to complete a questionnaire which asks them to give 10 characteristics which they believe necessary for a student to be successful on the job. The questionnaire, accompanied by a cover letter, was delivered to each employer by the researcher, explained, and an emphasis was placed on the need for a prompt return.

The second step was to compile the characteristics from the participants' responses. Using this list each respondent was asked to evaluate and rank each item on a seven-point continuum scale as "important" or "not important."

Correspondence Number Three was personally delivered and each respondent was asked to make any changes in the ranking formulated after the second round, and if there were any changes to give reasons for the changes.

The results of the three rounds resulted in a listing of student characteristics which the employers felt were important for employment and job success. The results of the research to be used as a tool for evaluation of the total cooperative vocational program and its curriculum. At the local level, there is a need to see that these characteristics are incorporated into the Cooperative Vocational Education Core Curriculum, which is the basic text used in Cooperative Vocational Education at Union High School. The list of characteristics may also be incorporated into the Personnel Evaluation Sheet. This form is used by the employers to evaluate Cooperative Vocational Education students' performance on the job.

Selection of the Respondents

The respondents of this study were 50 selected cooperative vocational education training station sponsors (employers) in the Tulsa area. The employers were chosen from all occupational areas, because it was desired that all areas be involved. Each employer, in order to participate in the study, had to have knowledge of the cooperative vocational education program at Union High School. The respondents were selected because of their interest and desire to help with the Cooperative Vocational Education program and it was felt that they would be willing to participate in every step of the study.

The fifty (50) participants were personally delivered a letter which explained the study and the steps to follow if they chose to participate in the study (Appendix A).

The selection of experts is sometimes difficult, even when a definition of the expertise is available. Whether a man is an expert may be judged in many ways, his experience, his education, or his skill knowledge. The position of the participants of the study in the close relationship with the everyday world of work, seems to give them a certain amount of access to expertise in defining the characteristics needed for employment and job success.

Data Collection and Treatment

The data for this study was collected using three correspondence sheets which were delivered and explained to each respondent by the researcher. The first correspondence sheet explained the purpose of the study, the procedures to follow, and the Delphi Correspondence

Sheet No. 1 (Appendix A). Correspondence Sheet No. 1 asked the participants to list ten (10) characteristics that they felt were important for an employee to be successful on the job. If they had problems with producing answers for question number one, there were two additional questions which were developed to generate additional responses. Question number two asked "What negative traits do you find most common in your employees?" Question number three asked, "What positive traits do you like to find in your employees?" Participants were not asked to respond or list in any particular order. A self-addressed, stamped envelope, along with an ink pen were provided to improve return rate.

Each subsequent correspondence sheet was distributed to all participants in the study, whether or not they returned the other surveys. This provided a chance for all the participants to respond to the list of statements, even if they might be hesitant to express their opinion or failed to mail back the first correspondence sheets.

The responses received from Correspondence Sheet No. 1 were compiled into a list, which was condensed to eliminate redundancy and ambiguity (Appendix B). Fifty-seven statements, that represented the participants' responses as concisely as possible, made up the basis in developing Correspondence Sheet No. 2.

The 57 statements were randomly listed on Correspondence Sheet No. 2 and were not preceeded by numbers to indicate a priority or order of importance. A seven-point continuum was provided for rating each statement, in which one (1) was to indicate most important and seven (7) least important. Correspondence Sheet No. 2 was delivered to each respondent by the researcher and the employer was asked to either fill

is out at that time or mail it back in a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

Upon receipt of Correspondence Sheet No. 2 the responses were totaled for each statement, and the arithmetic mean was calculated for each statement. An example of the calculation is shown in Table I.

TABLE I
COMPUTATION OF MEAN

Example Item	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Responses	6	15	0	4	5	14	6
$\frac{(1 \times 6) + (2 \times 15) + (4 \times 4) + (5 \times 5) + (6 \times 14) + (7 \times 6)}{50} =$ $\frac{217}{50} = 4.34$							

The statements were listed in rank order of importance as determined by the employers' response mean ratings. The statement with the lowest mean overall was ranked as number one.

The statements ranked in order were used as the basis for Correspondence Sheet No. 3. The participants were delivered the survey by the researcher, and were asked to review the rank order of priorities. If the participants disagreed they were to indicate any change and give their reason for the change.

The responses from Correspondence Sheet No. 3 for suggested changes were tabulated in order to determine any over-all changes in the final priority ranking.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine cooperative vocational education student characteristics important for employment and job success as viewed by employers. In order to accomplish this purpose, employer-participants were asked to follow the procedures of a modified Delphi technique.

The findings relative to the research question are presented in this chapter. The purpose of this chapter is to describe collection procedures, return rates and analyze the data collected from the final returns.

Return Rates

The study involved 50 employers participating in a modified Delphi technique which employed the use of three correspondence sheets to gather data and determine the consensus of the group.

The return of information from Correspondence Sheet No. 1 was slow. After one and one-half weeks the returns were not all in, totaling 22 returned (44 per cent). Participants were contacted by telephone which increased the returns by 24 or a total of 92 per cent for Correspondence Sheet Number One, as shown on Table I.

Each subsequent correspondence sheet was distributed to all participants in the study. This was done in order to obtain as many opinions as possible, even though participants were hesitant to express their opinion or failed to mail back the first survey sheets.

Correspondence Sheet No. 2 was individually delivered to the employers and they were asked to fill them out at that time. The responses reached 47 (94 per cent return rate), because only a few asked to mail the survey back. There were two returns that were received late, after the calculations on Correspondence Sheet No. 2 were completed and their rating was not used in the study.

The third correspondence sheet was mailed out to the participants and followed up by telephone. Those participants who wished to make changes in the rank order were personally visited to pick up the changes in writing.

TABLE II
NUMBERS AND PERCENTAGES OF PARTICIPANTS' RETURNS

	Number Sent	Returned	Per Cent
Correspondence No. 1	50	46 (1)*	92
Correspondence No. 2	50	47 (2)*	94
Correspondence No. 3	50	49	98

*Responses returned late and were not used in the calculation of means.

Results of Analysis

Correspondence Sheet No. 1

Employers were asked to list ten (10) characteristics which they felt were necessary for employment and job success. There were 101 original statements received from Correspondence Sheet No. 1. The original statements were listed and then combined and condensed to eliminate duplications and ambiguity. This resulted in fifty-seven (57) statements which represented the opinions of the employers on traits that are necessary for job success.

The statements became the basis for Correspondence Sheet No. 2, which was then taken to the employers asking them to indicate their opinion of the importance of each statement. Their opinion of the importance of the statements, was shown by rating each on a seven-point continuum (Appendix C).

Correspondence Sheet No. 2

The second survey contained a list of fifty-seven (57) unnumbered statements. The statements were randomly listed to prevent any indication of preconceived priority. Using the ratings gained from the seven-point continuum, a tabulation of the mean for each statement was calculated. From the calculations, a list of statements was established. The first statement or most important was the response with the lowest mean. Table III shows the rank order of the statements according to their calculated mean.

TABLE III
STATEMENTS IN RANK ORDER BY MEANS

Rank Number	Mean	Statements
1	1.20	Attendance
2	1.26	Listens to instructions
3	1.28	Reliable and dependable
4	1.30	Follows instructions
5	1.33	Punctual
6	1.34	Follows directions
7	1.35	Notification of absence or tardiness
8	1.37	Trustworthy
9	1.43	Willing to work
10	1.43	Observant of rules
11	1.54	Respect for supervisors and authority
12	1.59	Willing to learn
13	1.59	Does job promptly when asked
14	1.63	Respect company property
15	1.65	Works without supervision
16	1.70	Protects company assets
17	1.72	Courteous and friendly
18	1.76	Pride in workmanship
19	1.80	Accepts constructive criticism
20	1.80	Doing work to be done without being told
21	1.83	Efficient

TABLE III (Continued)

Rank Number	Mean	Statements
22	1.87	Cooperative
23	1.89	Loyalty
24	1.91	Helpful
25	1.96	Knowledge necessary to carry on various duties associated with the job
26	2.00	Ability to communicate
27	2.02	Pleasant personality
28	2.04	Industrious, ambitious, and self-motivated
29	2.04	Willing to work toward self-improvement
30	2.04	Able to show initiative
31	2.07	Appropriate dress
32	2.07	Able to work with different people
33	2.09	Ability to think
34	2.09	Constructive worker
35	.11	Well groomed
36	2.11	Strives to perfect techniques
37	2.11	Desire to please
38	2.13	Safety conscious
39	2.15	Dedicated
40	2.15	Shows speed, accuracy, and neatness
41	2.15	Observant of problems and details
42	2.17	Ability to reason
43	2.19	Personal pride and confidence

TABLE III (Continued)

Rank Number	Mean	Statements
44	2.20	Motivated doer
45	2.22	Must like people
46	2.24	Considerate of fellow workers
47	2.26	Responsible and mature
48	2.26	Able to adjust to different types of work
49	2.28	Calm, poised, and patient
50	2.30	Proficient in job skills
51	2.33	Self-disciplined
52	2.35	Able to improvise
53	2.37	Compatible
54	2.46	Persistent and determined
55	2.57	Tactful
56	2.63	Enthusiastic and outgoing
57	2.71	Performs tasks that seems unnecessary and unproductive

The respondents commented on a problem of rating the statements, for they felt that all the characteristics were important and it was difficult for them to indicate a preference of one over the other. Consequently, several responses had the same calculated mean and were

listed in the same order as they appeared in Correspondence Sheet No. 2.

The statements, in rank order by their means, were used on Correspondence Sheet No. 3, which asked the participants to agree with the ratings, or to note the changes and to explain the reasons for the change.

Correspondence Sheet No. 3

The suggested changes in the rank order of the statements from Correspondence Sheet No. 3 were calculated to determine the extent of changes in the ranking. The number of changes for each statement were multiplied by the statement's number. The total of this calculation was divided by the number of participants, which resulted in a new arithmetic mean. The participants reasons for rank order changes are shown in Appendix E.

There were very few changes requested from the employers. The second, third and sixth statements were grouped together and listed as number two "Follows Instructions" as suggested by many participants. Calculations of new arithmetic means brought about the changes of moving the statement ranked thirtieth to twenty-second and the statement ranked forty-first to twenty-third. The 55 statements in rank order after tabulation of the changes from Correspondence III are shown in Table IV.

TABLE IV
FINAL RANKING OF STATEMENTS AFTER CORRESPONDENCE III

Rank Number	Statement
1	Attendance
2	Follows instructions
3	Reliable and dependable
4	Punctual
5	Notification of absence or tardiness
6	Trustworthy
7	Willing to work
8	Observant of rules
9	Respect for supervisors and authority
10	Willing to learn
11	Do job promptly when asked
12	Respect company property
13	Works without supervision
14	Protects company assets
15	Courteous and friendly
16	Pride in workmanship
17	Accepts constructive criticism
18	Doing work to be done without being told
19	Efficient
20	Cooperative
21	Loyalty

TABLE IV (Continued)

Rank Number	Statement
22	Able to show initiative
23	Appropriate dress
24	Helpful
25	Knowledge necessary to carry on various duties associated with the job
26	Ability to communicate
27	Pleasant personality
28	Industrious, ambitious, and self-motivated
29	Willing to work toward self-improvement
30	Able to work with different people
31	Ability to think
32	Constructive worker
33	Well groomed
34	Strives to perfect techniques
35	Desire to please
36	Safety conscious
37	Dedicated
38	Shows speed, accuracy and neatness
39	Observant of problems and details
40	Ability to reason
41	Personal pride and confidence
42	Motivated doer
43	Must like people

TABLE IV (Continued)

Rank Number	Statement
44	Considerate of fellow workers
45	Responsible and mature
46	Able to adjust to different types of work
47	Calm, poised, and patient
48	Proficient in job skills
49	Self-disciplined
50	Able to improvise
51	Compatible
52	Persistent and determined
53	Tactful
54	Enthusiastic and outgoing
55	Performs tasks that seems unnecessary and unproductive

The top 10 characteristics that the participants rated as important for employment and job success are listed as:

1. Attendance
2. Follows instructions
3. Reliable and dependable
4. Punctual
5. Notification of absence or tardiness

6. Trustworthy
7. Willing to work
8. Observant of rules
9. Respect for supervisors and authority
10. Willing to learn

An interesting facet of the study is that the characteristic of "Ability to think" was listed as Number 31, "Ability to reason," listed as Number 40, and "Proficient in job skills" listed as Number 48. The reason for these statements being ranked lower could be attributed to the fact that most jobs held by High School students are routine and require very little skill proficiency.

There were interesting comments collected within the process of this study, that could not be shown as numerical data, but are very relevant to this study. The following are comments received on the final ranking and reason for "Attendance" being ranked as first in importance.

"If employees come to work, then we are able to get something from them. If they don't come, then we have nothing."

"Employees should realize that they are hired because they are needed, and should refrain from missing time needlessly."

Many employers were very enthusiastic about the study and the results. One employer is planning to use the second correspondence as a survey of how their employees view the importance of the characteristics developed by this study. An employer is planning to use the characteristics in their employee handbook and another employee would

somehow like to incorporate the findings for use in their employee performance review evaluations.

An interesting suggestion was made concerning how different the outcome of this study would be if the research was done with only business and sales occupations and another done only on industrial type occupations.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This study was concerned with the development of a list of characteristics of the Cooperative Vocational Education student that are important for employment and job success, as viewed by employers. A modified Delphi technique was used to gather the opinions of 50 selected cooperative vocational education training station sponsors or employers in the Tulsa, Oklahoma area.

A correspondence sheet was used to gather the opinions of the employers, of the characteristics that are necessary for job success. These statements were condensed to eliminate duplicates and redundancy. The 57 statements were listed on Correspondence No. 2 and participants were asked to rate each statement according to its level of importance on a seven-point continuum. The total group's mean for each statement were calculated and the items were listed in rank order by the mean. All 57 statements were listed on correspondence three and the participants asked to agree to the rank order or make changes in the ranking and give the reasons for the change.

Summary of Findings

The data collected from Correspondence No. 2 showed the importance of the characteristic statements, by calculating the mean of the response scores. The statements were listed in rank order using the response with the lowest mean as the most important. The total of 57 statements in rank order made up the third correspondence. There were 10 participants of the 50 who suggested changes in the ranking and the reasons for the change (Appendix E). Many respondents felt that statements Nos. 2, 4, and 6 were so similar that they should be combined, thus moving all other statements up, changing the total from 57 statements to 55. The changes in the rank order were minimal, therefore the results of this study was a consensus of the characteristics important for success on the job, as viewed by employers in the Tulsa, Oklahoma area.

The findings of this research may be used as the basis for evaluation of the Cooperative Vocational Education programs and curriculum materials. At the local level, a search of the Cooperative Vocational Education Core Curriculum, the basic text used in Cooperative Vocational Education, will be done to see if these characteristics have been stressed. If no evidence of the use of the characteristics are found within the Core Curriculum, then locally the characteristics will be incorporated into a unit within the Core Curriculum.

Another use for the list of characteristics would be to incorporate them into the Personnel Evaluation Sheet, the evaluation used by employers to evaluate Cooperative Vocational Education students' performance on the job.

Conclusions

Using the analysis of data collected in this study and a review of literature the following conclusions may be presented as indications of employers views of characteristics needed for job success.

1. Throughout the ERIC System search of literature there was no research found in which employers were asked to give their opinion of characteristics which they felt are necessary for employment and job success.
2. To produce relevant curriculum materials or effective vocational programs, employers should be involved in their development as well as teachers, administrators, curriculum specialists, students, and parents, as found in a review of literature.
3. A desire to help with the improvement of the Cooperative Vocational Education programs was indicated in the responses given by employers of which characteristics are needed and their importance in preparing students for success on the job.
4. The changes in the rank order from the third correspondence were minimal; therefore, there was a consensus of the total group on the rank order of the statements.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the information obtained from this study:

1. The findings and conclusions of this study should be used as a basis for local evaluation of the Cooperative Vocational Education program and curriculum materials.
2. That similar research in the future be done with employers in similar areas such as: only business or only industrial occupations.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

TRANSMITTAL LETTER, DELPHI CORRESPONDENCE

SHEET NUMBER ONE

March, 1977

Dear Employers:

The purpose of this letter is to ask for your cooperation and participation in a study to determine characteristics that you feel are necessary to prepare students for employment and job success.

Your participation in filling out the enclosed questionnaire will provide a basis for evaluation of the total Cooperative Vocational Education program. The goal of the CVE program is to help students become successful at work and to prepare them for entry level or gainful employment. To keep up with the technological changes that are occurring in our society, there is a need for continuous change in vocational education. Ideally, the outcome of this research will provide personnel to choose from who are better prepared for work with the employers' needs in mind.

Your participation would involve responding to three separate instruments. It will require no more than ten minutes of your time to respond to each instrument as follows:

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Correspondence
No. 1 | Request you to list characteristics that you feel are necessary for a person to be successful on the job. |
| Correspondence
No. 2 | A list of items will be compiled from the responses to Correspondence No. 1 and returned to you. You will then be asked to rank the importance of each item. |
| Correspondence
No. 3 | The ranking of each item will be compiled from the response to Correspondence No. 2. You will then be asked to agree with the order as listed or revise your opinion of the order and list the reasons for any change. |

I hope that you will see the benefit of the study and the importance of your input as an employer, to the Vocational Education programs in preparing youth to become better workers. If you are

willing to assist me in this effort, please complete the attached instrument, and return it in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope at your earliest convenience. Please accept this pen as appreciation for filling out the enclosed questionnaire.

Sincerely,

Beth Shipman
Cooperative Vocational Education
Coordinator
Union High School

CORRESPONDENCE SHEET NO. 1

(To be enclosed in return mail)

1. Please list ten (10) characteristics which you believe necessary for a student to be successful on the job. (No particular order of importance is required to your statements).

*If you are having trouble with question No. 1, or would like to also give the following information, please answer the following questions.

2. In your company, what negative traits do you find most common among your employees?

3. In your company, what positive traits do you like to find in your employees?

APPENDIX B

STATEMENTS SUBMITTED BY RESPONDENTS

ORIGINAL STATEMENTS FROM

CORRESPONDENCE NO. 1

Attendance at work	Self-discipline
Observe rules	Does not horse-play
Positive attitude	Self-motivated
Patience	Safety conscious
Persistent	Stays with assign, even if simple, boring, until completed
Determined	Motivated
Power of reason	Smiles
Common sense	Sociable
Proficient skills	Trustworthy
Punctual	Tactful
Prompt	Takes orders
On time	Works without supervision
Protect company assets	Willing to learn
Perfect techniques	Willing to learn
Pride in work and workmanship	Willing to work
Personal pride	Willing to do more than asked
Self-esteem	Watch and take care of details
Responsibility	Come to work when called
Respect for supervisor and authority	Organization
Reliable	Pleasant disposition
Respect for company property	Pleasant personality
Speed and accuracy	Inform employer when late or not coming
Separates "personal" from work	

Does quality work	Cheerful
Interested	Enthusiasm
Not a clock watcher	Cooperative
Sincere	Calm
Stays busy	Poised
Follows instructions	Stays cool
Inquisitive	Courtesy
Desire	Polite
Productive	Compatible
Quantity of work	Gets along with others
Hard worker	Considerate
Ability to admit when wrong	Dependable
Ability to communicate	Does work prompt when asked
Ability (physical, mental, and mechanical)	Does what is told
Accepts constructive criticism	Dedicated
Appropriate dress	Desire to please
Clean	Diplomacy
Neat	Efficient
Well groomed	Friendly
Ability to adjust to others and work	Good character
Ambitious	Good worker
Ability to listen	Honesty
Awareness	Housekeeping
Aggressive	Imagination
Outgoing	Initiative
Industrious	Integrity
	Knowledge of job and products

Loyalty

Looks for quicker ways to do a job

Likes people

Leader-trainer

Maturity

Accuracy

Speech

Ask for help when needed

Handle money

Think for themselves

Good posture

Confidence

Helpful

Interest and pride in total business

Likes the job

Desire to advance

Self-improvement

Does work correctly

Follows up problems

Doer

Informs supervisor when job is
completed

Does not waste time

Improvise without help

Observant

Works well with the public

Does an honest days work for an honest days pay

APPENDIX C

TRANSMITTAL LETTER AND CORRESPONDENCE

SHEET NUMBER TWO

LOYALTY

Loyalty	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Protect company assets	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Respect company property	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Dedicated	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

PERSONAL APPEARANCE

Appropriate dress	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Well-groomed	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

PHYSICAL, MENTAL AND MECHANICAL SKILLS

Ability to think	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Ability to reason	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Ability to communicate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Proficient in job skills	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

KNOWLEDGE OF JOB

Knowledge necessary to carry on various duties associated with the job	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Able to show initiative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

QUALITY OF WORK

Show speed and accuracy and neatness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Motivated doer	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Observant of problems and details	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Pride in workmanship	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

PRODUCTIVITY

Follows instructions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Constructive worker	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strives to perfect technique	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Safety conscious	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Efficient	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Listens to instructions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

WORK WITH PUBLIC

Courteous and friendly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Must like people	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Helpful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Tactful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Calm, poised, and patient	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

WORK RELATIONS

Respect for supervisors and authority	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Accepts constructive criticism	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Desire to please	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Follows directions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Works without supervision	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Compatible	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Cooperative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Considerate of fellow workers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

RESPONSE TO WORK DEMANDS

Able to adjust to different types of work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Able to work with different people	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Do job promptly when asked	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Perform task that seems unnecessary and unproductive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Doing work to be done without being told	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

OBSERVANT OF RULES

Observant of rules	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Attendance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Notification of absence or tardiness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Punctual	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

APPENDIX D

TRANSMITTAL LETTER AND CORRESPONDENCE

SHEET NUMBER THREE

Correspondence Sheet No. 3

Rank Number

1. Attendance
2. Listens to instructions
3. Reliable and dependable
4. Follows instruction
5. Punctual
6. Follows directions
7. Notification of absence or tardiness
8. Trustworthy
- *9. Willing to work
- *10. Observant of rules
11. Respect for supervisors and authority
- *12. Willing to learn
- *13. Does job promptly when asked
14. Respect company property
15. Works without supervision
16. Protects company assets
17. Courteous and friendly
18. Pride in workmanship
- *19. Accepts constructive criticism
- *20. Doing work to be done without being asked
21. Efficient
22. Cooperative
23. Loyalty

Rank Number

- 24. Helpful
- 25. Knowledge necessary to carry on various duties associated with the job.
- 26. Ability to communicate
- 27. Pleasant personality
- 28. Industrious, ambitious, and self-motivated
- *29. Willing to work toward self-improvement
- *30. Able to show initiative
- **31. Appropriate dress
- **32. Able to work with different people
- ***33. Ability to think
- ***34. Constructive worker
- ****35. Well groomed
- ****36. Strives to perfect techniques
- ****37. Desire to please
- 38. Safety conscious
- *****39. Dedicated
- *****40. Shows speed, accuracy, and neatness
- *****41. Observant of problems and details
- 42. Ability to reason
- 43. Personal pride and confidence
- 44. Motivated doer
- 45. Must like people
- 46. Considerate of fellow workers
- *****47. Responsible and mature
- *****48. Able to adjust to different types of work

Rank Number

49. Calm, poised, and patient
50. Proficient in job skills
51. Self-disciplined
52. Able to improvise
53. Compatible
54. Persistent and determined
55. Tactful
56. Enthusiastic and outgoing
57. Performs tasks that seems unnecessary and unproductive

Asterisks (*) indicate statements with the same calculated ranking

June 1, 1977

Dear Employer:

I would like to express my gratitude for your assistance in the study of successful employee characteristics. Your help will be instrumental in the development of a relevant Cooperative Vocational Education curriculum based on employer needs.

Enclosed are your opinion statements in rank order according to their importance as determined by the total employer group. Would you please review the rank order of the statements? I will call you later in the week to see if you agree with the rank order as listed or feel that some statements should be reranked.

I would once again like to thank you for your time and assistance on this study and for your support of the Cooperative Vocational Education program, which through both we are striving to help young people become successful employees.

Sincerely,

Beth Shipman
CVE Coordinator

APPENDIX E

REASONS FOR CHANGING STATEMENTS' RANKINGS

Participants' Reasons for Rank Change
in Third Delphi Survey

Rank Change	Statements and Reasons
8 to 1	<p>"Trustworthy"</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In the retail business this is very important. If you hire a person that is trustworthy then you shouldn't have to worry about loyalty, reliability and so on. 2. With the amount of money we have this is very important.
31 to 4	<p>"Appropriate Dress"</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. When working in a clothing store you need to be able to show the customer the way our clothing can be worn and look good in them. 2. One has to be careful what is worn around the young children.
23 to 6	<p>"Loyalty"</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This is needed to keep them with our company.
17 to 9	<p>"Courteous and friendly"</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This is what keeps our customers coming back.
35 to 4	<p>"Well groomed"</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This is very important in the food service industry, because of health reasons.
45 to 3	<p>"Must like people"</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. People are who we work for and must work with.

Rank Change

Statements and Reasons

-
- | | |
|----------|--|
| 51 to 15 | "Self-discipline" |
| | 1. Workers must be able to govern themselves and forget the horse-play, there is not time to always be watching them. |
| 25 to 4 | "Knowledge necessary to carry on various duties associated with the job" |
| | 1. Our workers must be able to work in various positions in our store. |
| 28 to 6 | "Industrious, ambitious, and self-motivated" |
| | 1. This is what selling is all about. |
| 30 to 7 | "Able to show initiative" |
| | 1. Workers must be able to get work done without being told, by keeping busy they are helping the company and not getting bored. |
| 50 to 13 | "Proficient in job skills" |
| | 1. In order to be a good employee, you must be able to do your job well. |
| 56 to 12 | "Enthusiastic and outgoing" |
| | 1. This is a must for a good salesman. |
| 31 to 9 | "Appropriate Dress" |
| | 1. Young people need to learn the way to dress for work. |
| | 2. There is a certain type of clothing that is worn in working in Day Care. No halters, or shorts, because of the parents. |

VITA

Elizabeth Ann Shipman

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: COOPERATIVE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS
IMPORTANT FOR EMPLOYMENT AND JOB SUCCESS AS VIEWED BY EMPLOYERS

Major Field: Vocational-Technical and Career Education

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Heavener, Oklahoma, September 9, 1949,
the daughter of Gordon and Tommie Cherry.

Education: Graduated from Union High School, Tulsa, Oklahoma,
in May, 1967; received a Bachelor of Science degree in
Home Economics from Oklahoma State University, in May, 1971;
completed requirements for Master of Science degree in
July, 1977.

Professional Experience: Teacher of Home Economics from September,
1971 to May, 1974. From September, 1974 to May, 1975
taught part-time Home Economics and worked part-time as
a Cooperative Vocational Education teacher--coordinator at
Union High School. Presently employed as a Cooperative
Vocational Education Teacher--Coordinator at Union High
School, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Professional Organizations: Oklahoma Vocational Education
Association, American Vocational Association, Oklahoma
Education Association, National Education Association, Union
Classroom Teachers Association.